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ANIMAL SERVICES CENTER SUSPENDS ADOPTION FOR 20 DAYS

The Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley is suspending all adoptions for 20 days while staff works with the New Mexico Department of Health to address an outbreak of Giardia, an intestinal parasite.

Dr. Susan Baiz is the facility's medical director, and she is overseeing the medical response in close coordination with Executive Director Clint Thacker, who cancelled a planned vacation to remain on site.

"Giardia is the most commonly diagnosed intestinal parasite in the United States," Thacker said. "The most common transmission is drinking contaminated water. However, feces is the next most common transmission method. The parasite is transmittable to humans, so we have implemented strict protocols to protect our employees, as well as the animal population while we address the outbreak."

Thacker said staff is reaching out to recent adopters in an effort to assist them with treatment as necessary, and to advise them of the symptoms and avoidance strategies.

A rescue group in Phoenix has been apprised of the situation but still wants to receive a shipment of 60 dogs, all of which will be treated prior to the shipment next week. The rescue group is ordering medication in advance of the transport.

Thacker said the ASCMV's cat population is showing no signs of infection. The cats are kept in a separate area of the building from the dog populations.

Adoptions of cats from the facility will continue, he said, as will low-cost surgeries for animals brought in by the public. The surgical site is located in a building separate from the main facility, where the outbreak is being contained.

"We've got the situation under control, and we're exercising an abundance of caution as





we navigate the treatment period,” Thacker said. “I want to commend Dr. Baiz and the staff for their collective dedication to our animal population. We look forward to resuming our aggressive adoption program just as soon as we can restore the facility to the pre-outbreak levels of health and wellness.”

“This has been an unanticipated but necessary expense,” Thacker said. “The cost of medicating the entire shelter population is just over \$4,000. Our already tight budget just got tighter.”

Thacker said a fundraiser is being set up at youcaring.com, and more information is available on the website at www.ASCMV.org.

Reporters seeking more information or interviews may call ACMV Executive Director Clint Thacker at (801) 200-9325.



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